

## 5.14 LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND CONFINEMENT

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Water quality problems related to livestock grazing and livestock confinement facilities in the Lake Tahoe Basin are similar to those described in the sections of Chapter 4 on resource management and agriculture, but the number of animals involved is generally lower than in other parts of the Lahontan Region. Range grazing occurs on National Forest lands and on some other large publicly and privately owned parcels; there are several riding stables, and some “backyard horses.” Because of the sensitivity of Lake Tahoe to sediment and nutrient loading, and the importance of SEZs, which have received the greatest historical grazing use, the following control measures have been adopted for the Tahoe Basin in addition to the regionwide control measures in Chapter 4. Control measures for livestock confinement facilities are discussed together with those for grazing operations because they are combined in the 208 Plan (TRPA 1988).

The 208 Plan (Vol. I, page 102) identifies needs for controls on grazing and livestock confinement to protect SEZs and seasonally wet soils from trampling, compaction, or storage of animal wastes. In addition, it states that previously disturbed areas should be restored.

### Control Measures

The State Board adopted the following control measures in 1980: Existing stables and corrals in SEZs should be relocated outside of SEZs on low erosion hazard lands with surface slopes of five percent or less (see Section 5.4 of this Chapter on the Tahoe Basin land capability system). Livestock confinement areas should have runoff management systems designed to prevent drainage from flowing through these areas or through manure storage sites. All surface runoff from the facility should be contained and disposed of through an infiltration system [or if high ground water is present, by other appropriate means approved by the Regional Board]. The intensity of grazing on private lands should be monitored and controlled to prevent water quality problems, and the Forest Service should continue to observe Best Management Practices to prevent overgrazing on National Forest lands.

A special use permit from the Forest Service is required to use National Forest lands for stables or livestock grazing. These permits can require compliance with the Best Management Practices needed to control erosion and runoff from livestock confinement areas or to prevent overgrazing.

The Regional Board shall consider adopting waste discharge requirements or taking other appropriate action if livestock grazing on public or private lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin is shown to result in degradation of water quality. In addition to the State Board guidelines discussed above, Regional Board permits for grazing and livestock confinement operations in the Lake Tahoe Basin should ensure attainment of the 208 Plan conditions below.

TRPA approval is required for any new livestock grazing or confinement project involving ten or more head of stock, expansion of existing activity outside of the current range, or an increase in livestock numbers of ten or more head at one time. An applicant for a grazing permit shall submit a grazing management plan prepared by a qualified range consultant. The grazing plan shall include pertinent information and a certification by the range consultant that the grazing plan complies with the TRPA Code of Ordinances.

TRPA has made the following additional commitments with respect to control of livestock confinement and grazing in the 208 Plan (Vol. I, page 153):

*“TRPA shall review the grazing BMPs of TRPA and the U.S. Forest Service, and if appropriate, revise or refine the grazing BMPs in cooperation with affected segments of the public within one year of the date of USEPA adoption of these 208 Plan amendments.*

*In addition, grazing pursuant to TRPA approval shall comply with the following standards (Code, Section 73.2):*

- *grazing is limited to June 15 through September 15, or as indicated in the approval.*
- *livestock shall be allowed onsite only when soil is firm enough to prevent damage to soil and vegetation*
- *the grazing level shall not exceed the carrying*

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*capacity of the range.*

- *livestock use shall not conflict with the attainment of water quality standards*
- *new livestock confinement facilities shall be developed in conformance with the BMP Handbook, and*
- *livestock shall be excluded from banks of streams where soil erosion or water quality problems exist.”*

The BMP Handbook (TRPA 1988, Vol. II, BMP 79) contains the following additional control measures:

*“The location of livestock containment facilities is important and sites should be carefully chosen based on the following guidelines.*

- 1. Facilities shall not be located within 100 feet of a stream environment zone (SEZ).*
- 2. Facilities shall not be located in areas subject to overland flow from upslope areas.*
- 3. Facilities must be located on gently sloping to flat land (5% slope or less).*
- 4. Facilities shall not be located in areas which have less than 4 feet from the soil surface to the groundwater table at any time of the year.*

*In addition to the proper location of livestock confinement facilities, the following guidelines must be followed:*

- 1. Surface runoff from these facilities or animal waste stockpiles shall not be allowed to flow into an SEZ.*
- 2. Stockpiling of animal wastes within 100 feet of an SEZ is prohibited.*
- 3. No manure storage or waste piles are to be located on the site unless they are protected from precipitation and surface runoff.*
- 4. Facilities shall be equipped with an infiltration system designed for the 5-year, 6-hour storm or have an area of natural vegetation capable of infiltrating and providing treatment of the runoff.*

### *5. Manure shall be properly disposed of.”*

The BMP Handbook further provides that livestock confinement facilities shall be located, designed, and constructed under the direction of qualified professionals. If the facility is to be served by vehicles, the site must have loading-unloading areas that are outside of SEZs.

The 208 Plan provides that existing livestock confinement facilities not in conformance with the BMP Handbook shall be brought into conformance by July 1, 1992. This deadline was not met; however, TRPA adopted revised BMP retrofit schedules in 1992.

The SEZ Restoration Program (Vol. III) of the 208 Plan includes several projects which involve the reduction or elimination of grazing impacts upon SEZs.

Programs adopted by local governments to control onsite surface runoff problems under municipal stormwater permits should also set controls for stormwater from grazing and livestock confinement on private lands (see the discussions of municipal stormwater NPDES permits earlier in this Chapter and in Chapter 4). The Lahontan Regional Board shall issue waste discharge requirements or cleanup orders where local governments fail to set adequate controls.